

Remarks/Arguments:

This is a reply to the office action of May 2, 2006.

Claim 3 has been canceled and claims 4 and 5 are amended to depend from claim 6.

It is submitted that claim 6 clearly distinguishes the invention from the prior art of record.

Claims 6 defines a method which comprises the steps of scanning a band on a mail piece to detect for a sequence of transitions between areas of light and dark reflectance within the band, and generating an indication of a presence of an imprint of a postal indicium on detection of a transition succeeding a predetermined number of initial transitions at the start of the sequence of transitions.

Claim 8 defines the counterpart apparatus for imprinting postal indicia on mail pieces, and comprises a first sensor for detecting the sequence of transitions, and means operative to generate the indication of a presence of an imprint of a postal indicium on detecting a signal corresponding to a transition occurring after a predetermined number of transitions.

The prior art does not suggest imprinting a mail piece with a postal indicium, and subsequently scanning that mail piece to generate an indication of a presence of the imprint, as required by claim 6. Moreover, the prior art does not suggest generating an indication of a presence of an imprint of a postal indicium on detecting a transition following a predetermined number of transitions, recited in claim 8.

Accordingly, it is submitted that the claims presented patentably distinguish the invention from the disclosures of O'Callaghan et al.

Respectfully submitted,

/Charles W. Fallow/

Charles W. Fallow
Reg. No. 28,946

Shoemaker and Mattare, Ltd.
10 Post Office Road
Silver Spring, MD 20910
(301) 589-8900

November 2, 2006